

MINUTES OF MARION CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBERS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2015
6:30 P.M.

A regular meeting was held by City Council on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 6:30 p.m. over which Mayor Bobby L. Davis presided. Council members Michael Baker, Ralph Atkinson, Ronald Atkinson, Odessa Gregg, Joseph Frazier and Emerson Hunt were present. Also present were City Administrator Alan Ammons, City Treasurer Patricia Brown City Clerk Pam Jones and Attorney Kenneth Davis.

Mayor Davis called the meeting to order and Councilwoman Gregg gave the opening prayer. Mr. Ammons led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Davis welcomed citizens, guests and the press. (Hometown TV).

Councilman Joseph Frazier made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting on November 10, 2015, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried.

Chase Funderburk of the Marion Fire Department was named *November Employee of the Month* and presented with a gift certificate. Mayor Davis thanked Mr. Funderburk for a job well done.

The Mayor's Monthly Beautification award for November was awarded to the Marion High School Interact Club. Due to a scheduling conflict, Ms. Brandie Cook was not in attendance to accept the award. The award will be delivered to her at Marion High School.

Mayor Davis requested a resolution from Council for Bishop R. F. Davis for 65 Years of Pastoral Service. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to accept Mayor Davis' request for this resolution, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried. The resolution and a plaque from the City of Marion will be presented to Bishop Davis on Saturday, December 12th, at a banquet in his honor.

Mr. Ammons stated that a resolution for a USDA grant will start the process in acquiring a new fire truck and \$50,000 is available. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to authorize the Mayor and Administrator to move forward with a Resolution for the USDA grant for a firetruck, as was discussed last month, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson. Motion carried.

Regarding bids for the parking lot at the Council on Aging, Mr. Ammons stated that this is the project Senator Williams asked us to assist with and this is C-fund money that has been properly bid. He recommended accepting the low bid of \$73,565 from Herrington Construction. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to accept the low bid of \$73,565 from Herrington Construction, as recommended by the Administrator; seconded by Councilman Michael Baker. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Mr. Ammons updated Council on FEMA commenting that on November 23rd, a town hall meeting was held at C. D. Joyner Auditorium in which FEMA had 12 representatives present to help our residents with issues from the flooding. HE asked that any residents who still needed help be made aware that the sign-up period has been extended through February.

The sidewalk project should begin this week, permits have been secured from SCDOT.

CITY ATTORNEY'S LEGAL UPDATE

Attorney Davis had nothing to report at this time.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Mayor Davis stated that departmental reports were sent in Council's packets. The letter to Mayor and Council dated December 8th was received too late to be placed on the agenda, but Athletic Director Frank Page is present to speak on the policy for recreation activities and any concerns. The Mayor explained that to be on the agenda, written notification must be given to the Clerk no later than 12 noon on the Thursday prior to the Council meeting. The agenda can be amended no later than 24 hours prior to the meeting, according to state law.

Mr. Page commented that the School District was contacted to ask for use of an activity bus to transport the 11-12 football team to Lexington for the state championship. The school turned down the request, which has happened over the years as we have seldom had access to school vehicles. To them, it is a question of liability. Councilman Hunt inquired if the City had any funding to help this team travel to the State Championship as they were representing Marion. Mr. Page responded that they generally tried to hold fundraisers, but due to time constraints were not able to. Also, individuals help as much as they can. Councilman Hunt asked if there was anything in the Recreation fund to help the kids, to which Mr. Page responded that there he doubted there was anything in the budget for this year, because the budget was done before we knew we would be competing and there is nothing available. A 25 passenger van was donated to the City, but is not ready for use due to needed repairs, but is expected to be put into use in the future. Normally teams depend on the parents to get them to the games. Councilman Hunt commented that it was almost irresponsible not to afford our youth the opportunity to excel. He further commented on how necessary it was to get the team to the playoff location in time to be mentally prepared to play. Councilman Hunt asked Mr. Ammons if there was anything in the budget or anything that could be done to help the team make this trip. At the request of Mayor Davis, Mr. Page explained that the bus taking the softball team to the World Series Championship in Louisiana was paid for with donations and with fundraisers held by the team (in a 2 week period before they travelled). Councilman Hunt reiterated that since the football team was representing Marion in the state championship, we should take some accountability and responsibility to help them get there. Mayor Davis stated that because Coach Hopkins was not on the agenda, he would not be able to comment at this time and Attorney Davis verified this. Councilman Ralph Atkinson commented that they received the letter regarding the football team's request just before this meeting began. He further commented that we have \$538,750 in our Recreation budget, which is a tremendous amount for recreation, but if the money is not budgeted and we don't have it, maybe it can be put in the budget for next year. We want to give them recognition for all they've done and we do appreciate that. Mayor Davis commented that starting last year, the City purchases medallions for all members of a team won has won a state championship; this year was 2 basketball teams

and a softball. We have no way to know how many teams will go to a state championship, but we will try, with Council's approval, to put something in next year's budget for teams who travel to play in a state championship. Mr. Page stated that players from all state championship teams this year were provided with a medallion from the City, a party for each team and a state champion t-shirt for every player, in recognition of their work and success. For the record, Councilman Hunt asked Mayor Davis if he could ask Coach Hopkins a question to which the Mayor agreed. Councilman Hunt then asked Coach Hopkins if he had attempted to rent some type of transportation, to which Coach Hopkins responded that he had checked and it would be \$2,000 to rent a bus. Mr. Hopkins was unable to make any further comments, as he was not on the agenda. Regarding the players getting rings, Mr. Page stated that no group has ever received championship rings from the City. One group this year is getting rings, but they are being purchased by parents of the players. Councilman Ralph Atkinson is in favor of the medals being presented from the City, but not any type of championship ring. Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson commented that the last championship team to travel held fundraisers in order to pay for their bus. Mr. Page suggested that we need a bigger support group of parents to help get the community involved because City can't carry the load by itself.

DISTRICTS AND CITY UPDATE FROM COUNCIL AND MAYOR:

Councilman Emerson Hunt apologized to the City and citizens for missing the last meeting. It is his hope that we help our children in any way we can and that we start to prepare for the chance that our teams are going further into the playoffs each year in all sports. This kids are the future of this City and County and we don't want them to have a bad perception of our City government in handling their affairs. The kids don't understand the concept of finances, they just want to play ball and have the support of their town

Councilwoman Odessa Gregg stated that she had been asked if Fire Department personnel had any type of sensitivity training. She will get with Mr. Ammons to find out how many people are employed at the Fire Department and what their positions are in order to respond the questions she was asked. She would like to make sure that those employees are able to deal with stress of the job and get any training that may be needed. Mayor Davis

commented that the Police Department had completed sensitivity training and the Fire Department would receive the same type training.

Councilman Ralph Atkinson stated that when the budget is prepared for next year maybe the line item for trophies can be tweaked tweaked, not increased, to again allow for medallions, which is a good thing that Mayor Davis has instituted.

Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson commented that we do what we can for our citizens, but we must stay within our financial boundaries. He also commented that the Christmas Tree Lighting was one of the best ones we have had.

Councilman Joseph Frazier commented that he echoed Councilman Atkinson's comment of the Tree Lighting and that the Tree Lighting was beautiful. He asked if it was normal for Mincey Tree Service to pick up tree debris (Presbyterian and Main) and Mayor Davis responded that the trees in question are on the City's right-of-way and it saves the City money.

Councilman Michael Baker commented that the uniforms for Recreation sports are included in the budget at an amount of \$20,000. He further commented that the public needs to know this. Councilman Ralph Atkinson stated that when his kids played sports at the Rec, the parents also paid a portion of the cost of the uniform. Mayor Pro-tem Atkinson inquired if the sponsors paid for the uniforms. Mr. Page responded that the average sponsor fee is \$200. Any time there is only one team in a division, then those players are given All-star quality jerseys or shirts because it is already know that they will represent Marion in the play-offs. When there are multiple teams in a division, they wear less expensive shirts/jerseys during regular season and when an All-star team will be chosen that team will receive their All-star shirt/jersey. The football team in question had 36 players and their jerseys cost \$900 (of which the sponsor fee covered \$200) There is a \$20,000 budget total for uniforms, which covers every sport in all ages that play at the City of Marion Recreation Department. Councilman Hunt stated that the budget is not enough for uniforms for all sports. Mr. Ammons commented that at the request of Recreation Director Ann Jackson and Mr. Page, the budget was increased by \$4,000 this year. Councilman Ralph Atkinson commented that there is a lot of money in our recreation budget and Mayor Davis stated there is more in our recreation budget than in any city our size. Councilman Hunt stated that we don't get any money from the County and

thought we were going to meet with them to discuss that issue. Councilman Hunt further stated that County children are welcome, but all these concerned citizens in Marion County need to get on board and start putting some money towards this. Mr. Page commented that the 11-12 football team will be playing for the State Championship at River Bluff High School in Lexington at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Mayor Davis commented that he wanted to make sure that everyone understands that we are doing as much as we can for our kids and will continue to let them know we care about them. Every child on a team that has won a state championship has received the same thing, a medallion, from the City. We award the medallion every time we win a state championship, so we are not overlooking or denying any child. We are accountable to the public, and we will address this for next year's budget, and will be dependent on Council's approval. There is information for Council from Rev. Joshua Nelson, pastor at Mt. Olive, regarding an event scheduled for late next year. Mayor Davis thanked Council for their approval of the Resolution for Bishop Davis for 65 Years of Pastoral Service. He also thanked the City employees for their hard working in getting Marion ready for Christmas. Mayor Davis offered thanks to all who donated to the food boxes. They will be assembled and then distributed during the week of December 14th.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter in the Street Department, Sanitation Departments and Police Department, seconded by Councilman Michael Baker; motion carried. Upon returning from Executive Session Mayor Davis stated that no action was taken. Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to enter regular session, seconded by Councilman Joseph Frazier; motion carried.

Mr. Ammons asked that Council consider making a necessary adjustment to the budget for our CDL drivers on their salaries and allow the Treasurer to make those adjustments with a refund we have coming back on property insurance. Councilman Emerson Hunt made a motion

to make the adjustments on the CDL drivers salaries, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson; motion carried.

ADJOURMENT

With no further business, Councilman Ralph Atkinson made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mayor Pro-tem Ronald Atkinson.

Mayor Bobby L. Davis

City Clerk Pam Jones

Taped December 8, 2015